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5 Assam cops killed in Mizo border firing

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

AT least five Assam Police personnel were killed and over 50 others, including civilians, injured when the Assam-Mizoram border row flared up on Monday that saw the police of the two states firing at each other. Automatic weapons, including light machine guns, were used by the Mizoram Police in the attack, the Assam government alleged.

The injured included Assam's Cachar Superintendent of Police Nimbalkar Vaibhav Chandrakant and the officer-in-charge of a police station in the district.

Ironically, while Assam has a BJP government, the ruling party in Mizoram is an NDA ally.

"Clear evidences are now beginning to emerge that unfortunately show that Mizoram Police has used Light Machine Guns (LMG) against personnel of @assampolice," tweeted a horrified Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma later in the day.

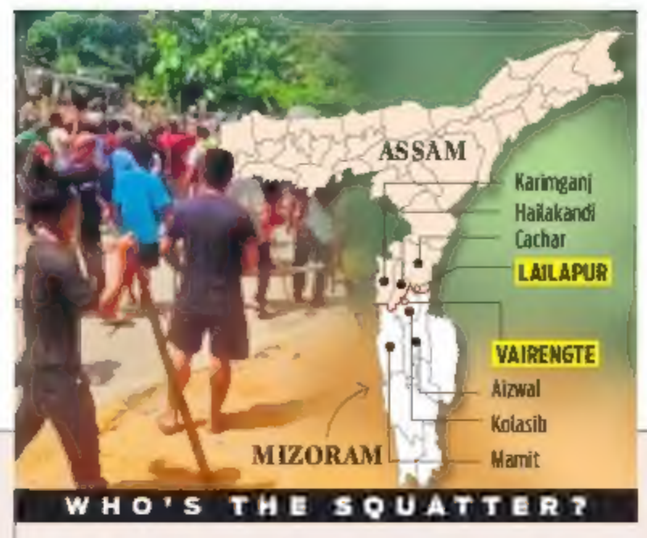
The incident came amidst a fortnight-long eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between the two police forces and two days after the CMs of the two states discussed the issue with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Meghalaya capital Shillong.

Shah spoke to the two CMs on Monday and asked them to peacefully resolve the issue. Following his intervention, the Assam Police withdrew from the site. The CRPF is now manning the area.

Blaming Mizoram for the flare-up and breaching status quo, an Assam government statement said, "Mizoram began constructing a road towards Rengti Basti in Assam, destroying the Inner Line Reserve Forest in Lailapur area. Simultaneously, the Mizoram side also set up a new armed camp on a hillock next to the camp of the neutral force, CRPF, in the same vicinity."

When Assam officials went to the area to request the Mizoram side not to disturb status quo, "they were surrounded and attacked by a mob of miscreants from the Mizoram side, which was visibly supported by the Mizoram Police."

CONTINUED ON P10



WHO'S THE SQUATTER?

Border conflicts have occurred since Mizoram was carved out of Assam as a Union Territory in 1972 to eventually become a state in 1987

There have been several rounds of talks between the two states since 1995 to resolve the issue

Officials and locals in Assam claim Mizos have been squatting on **1-3 km** land from the interstate border

But Mizoram groups claim the authorities in Assam have been using 'illegal Bangladeshis' to move 10-12 km inside their territory

The official stand of Mizoram is that the boundary should be demarcated based on a notification of 1875 that distinguished the Lushai Hills (present day Mizoram and erstwhile district of Assam) from the plains of Cachar

1933

THE POINT OF CONFLICT IS ANOTHER BRITISH-ERA NOTIFICATION OF 1933 THAT ASSAM FOLLOWS BUT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO MIZORAM, WHICH SAYS THEIR ANCESTORS WERE NOT CONSULTED ON THIS

In 1971, the interstate boundary was redefined and Mizos say it was done without their knowledge or consent. Much of Mizo land under British rule was included into Assam territory

At a time when there were no cars, I remember cycling to places on work for the party. I built the party when there was no one to do it - BS Yediyurappa, Ex-Chief Minister

Challenges aplenty for successor

While the BJP has made a paradigm shift by daring to ask Yediyurappa to quit, with an eye on the 2023 Assembly polls, the outgoing CM's successor is likely to face many challenges | P4

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot accepts resignation, dissolves council of ministers

Teary-eyed, BSY steps down as CM; suspense over successor continues

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

ON the day his government completed two years in office, BS Yediyurappa resigned as Karnataka chief minister on Monday. The 78-year-old BJP veteran leader announced his decision to resign from the top post with tears in his eyes and choking voice.

On the elaborately decorated dais of Vidhana Soudha's banquet hall where celebrations for his government's second-year anniversary were being held, Yediyurappa gave a farewell speech, recalling his struggles and reminiscing on his hard work for the party, before stunning his supporters with the resignation bomb.

"I have decided to go to Raj Bhavan and submit my resignation as chief minister. I am not sad. I am happy that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda gave me two additional years despite breaching the 75-year-old cap. Words are not enough to thank them. I appeal that all of us work together to build the party," he said at the end of his fiery and emotional speech, holding back tears.

With this, the four-time chief minister finally drew curtains on speculation over leadership change in the State.

"At a time when there were no cars, I remember cycling to places on work for the party. I built the party when there was no one to do it," he said, recalling his contribution to the party. Despite being a four-time chief minister, Yediyurappa has held the post only for five years and two months in total. With his exit, the chorus from religious leaders, who have been backing the 78-year-old, to bring in a Lingayat leader as chief minister has grown louder.

From Vidhana Soudha, Yediyurappa went straight to Raj Bhavan, where Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot wasted no time in accepting his two-line resignation letter, and issued a statement saying the council of ministers had been dissolved.

More than just tears

While the BJP has made efforts to deal with the supporters of outgoing CM BS Yediyurappa, clearly informing them to maintain party discipline, the leadership may not have factored in the raw anger in the Lingayat community. Nor did it factor in the effect of Yediyurappa's tears on the community. This feeling was simmering for about a week, ever since talk began of Yediyurappa's potential exit, and it exploded on social media on Monday. P4

Rejig of govt on cards

A complete revamping of the government is on the cards with BJP inclined at appointing four deputy chief ministers to take care of caste and regional equations. "I resigned voluntarily. Nobody coerced me to quit. I have decided to work for the party, and I will not accept any decorative posts," Yediyurappa asserted when asked if he would become the governor of a state. His claim of voluntary resignation is contradictory to the severe pushback he gave the BJP central leadership over the last few weeks.

The suspense over who will succeed him, however, continues. The BJP central leadership is expected to send an observer to Karnataka -- Dharmendra Pradhan perhaps -- to review the BJP Legislature Party meeting which is likely to be called on Wednesday or Thursday, where a new chief minister will be named.

While he may have resigned as chief minister, Yediyurappa has refused to walk quietly into the sunset, insisting that he will continue to be in active politics and work for the party. P4

HOW THE DRAMA UNFOLDED

JUNE 6
BS Yediyurappa says he will resign from his post the day the BJP central leadership asks him to

JUNE 16-18
After many BJP leaders speak openly against Yediyurappa, BJP general secretary Arun Singh holds a series of meetings with party leaders in Bengaluru. He says action will be taken against those speaking against the CM

JUNE 17
Yediyurappa meets PM Narendra Modi

JUNE 18
Yediyurappa meets BJP national president JP Nadda, denies reports of his resignation

JUNE 20
Seers from Lingayat and other communities back Yediyurappa, warn BJP against leadership change

JUNE 22
Yediyurappa breaks silence, says the high command will send a message

JUNE 25
CM visits flood-hit areas in Belagavi, says he will abide by high command's directions. Yediyurappa hints that he will step down

JUNE 26
He announces resignation at a ceremony to mark two years of government, says there was no pressure from the high command

JUNE 26
Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot accepts Yediyurappa's resignation, dissolves council of ministers. Yediyurappa to continue as chief minister till alternative arrangements are made

Staying in K'taka, BSY makes it clear he will not be a 'Margdarshak'

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

BS Yediyurappa, who resigned on Monday, could have continued as chief minister till August 2, but decided to put in his papers on the day he completed two years in office.

He had initially planned to visit Karwar in Uttara Kannada district, where floods have caused havoc, on Monday afternoon, but chose not to, as he did not want to hang on for another week, sources close to Yediyurappa told *TNIE*.

Sending out a clear message to his political detractors and the party high command that he is not among those who will join the "Margdarshak Mandal", the retirement home for party leaders who have crossed 75 years of age, Yediyurappa made it clear on Monday that he will be active in state politics and will not accept any assignment outside the State.

"I will work day and night to strengthen the party in the State to bring BJP back to power. We will start tomorrow," he said.

"There is no question of taking up governor's or any other position outside the State. Prime Minister Vajpayee had invited me to be part of his ministry, but I had declined as I wanted to work in the State," Yediyurappa said. Political analyst Prof Sandeep Shastri said the BJP high command would have loved to have him posted as governor and send him away from Karnataka, but he has fought back. P5

EXPRESS READ

Biden to announce end of US combat mission in Iraq

Washington: US President Joe Biden and Iraqi PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi are expected to announce that they have come to an agreement to end the US military's combat mission in Iraq by the end of the year, according to a US official.

Militant killed in encounter with forces in J-K's Kulgam

Srinagar: An unidentified militant was killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, police said. Security forces had launched a search operation in the Aharbal area of the district.

Veteran film actor Jayanthi passes away

Bengaluru: Eminent multi-lingual film actor Jayanthi, who had acted in more than 500 films in a career spanning around five decades, passed away on Monday, family sources said. The 75-year old, who acted in films in five languages, was suffering from age-related ailments and undergoing treatment for quite some time.

WELCOME BACK
Tokyo Olympic silver medallist Mirabai Chanu speaks to media after landing in New Delhi on Monday
Al-Rashidi
SHEKHAR YADAV

All things new and old

TOKYO 2020

A pair of 13-year-olds finished 1-2 in a new event while a 58-year-old walked away with bronze, underlining that age does not matter at the Olympics. A look at action from Tokyo on Monday...

Age is just a number: Japan's Momiji Nishiya and Brazil's Rayssa Leal, both 13, won gold and silver women's skateboarding. The new event has proved be a smash hit. At 58 years, Abdullah Al-Rashidi won a bronze in skeet shooting | P15, 16

Redemption time: After a poor individual round, the four mixed team pairs (two in 10m air pistol and two in 10m air rifle) have a chance at redemption. If they tackle the qualifying, they have a good chance to win a medal

Mamata takes lead to form snoopgate probe panel, Justice Lokur to head it

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

WITH the Centre blocking Opposition demands to come clean on the Pegasus snoopgate, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee sprang a surprise by setting up an inquiry commission headed by retired Supreme Court judge Madan Lokur into the matter.

Coming as it did on the day she arrived in Delhi to explore options of forging Opposition unity, setting up the panel sent an unambiguous message of her being the most strident opponent of Modi rule, thus giving her the right to lead the proposed coalition and sustain the momentum till the next general elections in 2024.

Talking to media before boarding a flight to Delhi, Mamata claimed the Centre had used the spyware to tune into a meeting she had with her advisor Prashant Kishor. "He (Kishor) got his cellphone audited and came to know that they (Centre) knew of one of our meetings through Pegasus," she alleged.

She had earlier brandished a taped handset to take a swipe at the Centre, following reports of her nephew Abhishek Banerjee's name figuring on a list of potential targets.

The BJP, however, was not amused, with its IT cell chief Amit Malviya tweeting, "Why are we even surprised that Mamata Banerjee has constituted a commission to probe bogus Pegasus Project? Her priorities have always been warped. If only she had shown such alacrity to probe post-poll violence and probe several Covid scams in Bengal."

Parliament stalled

Both Houses of Parliament on Monday saw repeated adjournments amid Opposition clamour for discussion on Pegasus snoopgate in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home minister Shah | P9

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